



U.S. Department of Justice

**Stephen J. Murphy
United States Attorney
Eastern District of Michigan**

*Suite 2001
211 West Fort Street
Detroit, Michigan 48226-3277
Fax: (313) 226-3561*

For Immediate Release:

Contact: Gina Balaya (313) 226-9193

Oct 18, 2006

EVENT: Guilty Plea

Defendant: Ibrahim Hijazi

**DEARBORN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO TRAFFICKING
IN COUNTERFEIT DETROIT TIGER BASEBALL CAPS**

A resident of Dearborn pleaded guilty today to trafficking in counterfeit Detroit Tiger baseball caps, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Ibrahim Hijazi, 47, of Dearborn Heights, Michigan, entered the guilty plea today in United States District Court before Judge Denise Page Hood.

The information presented to the court at the time of the plea showed that in July, 2005, Ibrahim Hijazi purchased and distributed counterfeit baseball-style caps bearing the Olde English D trademark of the Detroit Tigers. Hijazi sold the counterfeit items to businesses in the Eastern District of Michigan, some of which were located in Royal Oak, Michigan. These businesses, in turn, offered the items for sale to the general public during the week of the Major League Baseball All-Star Game in Detroit.

Investigators were led to Hijazi prior to the All-Star Game as a result of a joint operation between Major League Baseball, the Detroit Tigers, the Department of Homeland Security, and local law enforcement, including the Wayne County Sheriff's Office and the Royal Oak Police Department.

Under the terms of the plea agreement, Hijazi faces up to 6 months imprisonment and a fine of up to \$250,000.

United States Attorney Murphy said, "By protecting a trademark such as the Detroit Tigers' Olde English 'D,' federal trademark law protects the both the integrity of the marketplace and the economic health of businesses – and their employees – who have invested their resources into building the reputation of that trademark. This case is a great example of cooperation between federal, state, and local law enforcement, which I commend very highly. Efforts targeting the manufacturers, distributors, and sellers of counterfeit sporting goods merchandise take place before every major sporting event and will take place prior to the World Series. "

Special Agent in Charge Brian Moskowitz said, "ICE's broad authorities and expertise in combating trade fraud, financial crimes, and smuggling make ICE uniquely positioned to combat the global threat by counterfeiters. Our enforcement efforts target a criminal industry that costs the U.S. economy nearly a quarter trillion dollars annually."

Ethan G. Orlinsky, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, Major League Baseball Properties, Inc. said, "Today's developments underscore the message that counterfeiting is a serious offense and that companies or individuals who attempt to counterfeit other companies' products will be held accountable. MLB remains committed to maintaining the integrity of our products and ensuring the high level of quality that baseball fans everywhere have come to expect. We look forward to working with law enforcement in Detroit during the upcoming 2006 World Series, and we want to express our gratitude to the local, state, and national officials who share an ongoing commitment to ensuring counterfeiters are made to pay for their criminal activity."

A sentencing hearing was set by Judge Hood for February 22, 2007.

U.S. Attorney Murphy thanked the Tiger's organization and Robert Carr, attorney for the Tigers for their assistance and cooperation in this investigation and prosecution.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Sarah Resnick Cohen.